

# ILLUSIONS

REFERENCE

APRIL 2002

Pride Centre of Edmonton  
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FOR EDMONTON'S CROSDRESSERS AND THOSE WHO ADMIRE THEM

## EDITORIAL

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discussed; however, we've done well this year with a laid-back approach. The old exec approves.

**Dues are due!** \$50 gets you your annual membership, entitling you to the newsletter, events, socials, and a warm feeling about supporting our organization. These dues cover things like the newsletter, our mailbox, phone and printing bills, seed money for Winterfest, and the ad in the Transgendered section of SEE Magazine. Your treasurer awaits...

**Entry fees** will be levied to meetings, starting in September. This will cover refreshments. A draw will be held each meeting, and someone will get her money back. Twice a year we'll draw for special prizes from all attendees to previous meetings.

**Our library** is small but interesting, and we'd like to make it more of a resource for members. One suggestion is to acquire publications such as "Art&Illusion - a Guide to Crossdressing" and/or Melanie Phillips' voice lessons.

May 9 we'll be visiting the Unique Boutique (14226 Stony Plain Rd) at 8pm, for a clothes session. Bring money. The Est-Elle party turned out well (see photo at right), simply because we had so much fun doing something together. Elise is hunting for suggestions for the June meeting. Femme-tips seem to be of interest: makeup, wigs care, nails, jewellery, whatever!

**Events:** Announcing Messy Messy Crossdresser events via e-mail and phone works. How about tango night at La Boheme, or a High Tea in July? Is anyone interested in theatre? Major events are in the works, such as ISCWR events, Loud'n'Queer, Pride Week, and out-of-town events such as Calgary's. There's an August fundraiser at the Roost (we sell shooters for profit), the mighty Fringe Festival, and yes, we're planning the next Academy Awards party!

*Have fun, show pride, Shae*

**Illusions April/May 2002 - The Newsletter of the Illusions' Social Club**

Illusions is published bimonthly for members, advertisers, and interested individuals. Annual membership costs \$50; a business-card sized ad costs \$25. E-mail the editor for further info. - Edited by Shae Guerin - e-mail [shae@tic.ab.ca](mailto:shae@tic.ab.ca) - please send your newsletters here! - Contact PO Box 356, Edmonton, AB T5J 2P2, call 424-2685, e-mail [illusionsx42@yahoo.com](mailto:illusionsx42@yahoo.com) - Our website is at <http://www.geocities.com/illusionsx42>.

Cover photo of Crossroads publisher Michelle Hart by Shae Guerin.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello. My name is Cathy and I'm a crossdresser. I'm also the new president of Illusions for the upcoming year. Why run for President? Well, if it had not been for Illusions I might still be all dressed up with nowhere to go, and I wanted to give something back. Plus, the girls also mentioned I would have access to my own Presidential jet (apparently it's Wonder Woman's invisible one, because I've yet to see it).

This year should be a fun one. Last year's executive left us in great shape. Our membership is on the rise as is our profile. The newsletter (thanks to Shae) is going over like a 70% off sale at Laura (Laura II for me). Heck we were even on the cover of See Magazine last year and who could forget the always-fabulous Winterfest. This executive has some big pumps to fill.

Having said that, we are up to the challenge. I look forward to working with the other girls in the exec. They've got some great ideas for the upcoming year. Speaking of ideas, we need the members to share theirs'. Have any suggestions for a fun outing? Please let us know. A club is only as fun as its members.

I guess I've prattled on long enough. Enjoy this installment of fun and informative crossdressing fare. I'm off to look for this plane they promised me.

Catherine Johnson

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Illusions Calgary Annual Birthday Party, Saturday June 22.**  
Check <http://www.illusions.ab.ca> for details.

**Pride Week** comes in June. We'll be marching, or decorate a pickup and ride. The ISCWR Coronation weekend is, as usual, end of August. Be there!

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This year's Winterfest at Carole's Cafe was a delightful, well turned out affair, with over fifty attendees from across Western Canada. Having primped and polished for hours, it was still a surprise to see the results – everything from nicely-put-together to ohmigawd-what-a-wonderful-outfit.

Stephanie's spiderweb gown, Birdie's emerald velvet dinner suit, and Nancy's brilliant blue were only a few of the tasty bits of eye candy to behold. Mistress of Ceremonies Twiggy showed more elegant legginess than one would think possible, and as shown in the photos, everyone had major smiles on their faces.

Several participants had shown up at 6 sharp, and the party was well underway by half past. Schmoozing, meet and greet, and introducing oneself took up the rest of the cocktail hour. Michelle, editor of Crossroads magazine, and the gang from Calgary showed up looking gorgeous and happy to chat, the Saskatchewan Illusions girls were ever so elegant and pleasant, and local girls both new and old were right in the thick of things, soaking up egoboo and dishing it out.

Carole's smorg had something for everyone (the chicken marsala was really fine), and the bar was well patronized. Twiggy had a great show set up, and it ran like a clock. Dragooning Gina, Ginger, and Andrea into the Dating Game (with Gina's wife as the interviewee) was a stroke of brilliance, especially when Gina wasn't chosen! Later on she got Willima, Shirley, and Birdie to make like a chorus line. Those who weren't familiar with Twiggy's singing were treated to some of the good stuff, and she brought in her drag pals Kitten and Ginger to perform a Motown medley.

And we had giveaways! A small 50/50 draw pleased its winner, and dealers around town passed along several substantial goodies: a pretty collector's doll, store gift certificates, laser therapy credits, and more.

Oddly enough, as soon as the festivities wound down, everyone headed for Ginger's party at the hotel or Secrets Bar&Grill. The Secrets party was in that enviable position of being two dozen people in a bar that holds about 75 – we contributed heavily to the packed atmosphere, techno dance tunes filled the air, and everyone was in better than fine spirits.

Ginger's party back at the Comfort Inn, in contrast to her previous night's wing-ding, was a more quiet and laid-back affair. Wine and cheese, pleasant conversation, and cheerful smiles were the rule. Three cheers for Ginger hosting that all-important party mixer!

Friday's pre-Winterfest party was packed with most of the attendees, photos and Illusions newsletters were passed along, winter driving horror stories were exchanged, and we all had a late night. Of particular notice was the entry of the Saskatchewan girls. Andrea, a willowy and gentle goddess, showed up with her pals Gen and Julie, who sported one of the nicest tiny leather dresses I've seen on anyone. You go grrr!

As one would expect, the biggest thing everyone will remember is how wonderful it was to connect with each other in such nice settings.

- Shae Guerin

Fabulous time spent with the greatest of ladies that I have ever had the pleasure of being in the presence of in person. Looking forward to next year's event.

- Elise Ryan

A wonderful time was had in the hospitality room at the hotel, meeting new and interesting people. The actual Winterfest was an incredible array of beautiful women and incredible performers. The food was absolutely sumptuous - the chefs really outdid themselves. All in all it was the ultimate Girl's Night Out.

- Dawn Geree

Wow, wow, wow!!! The best Winterfest yet. Everyone had a great time. We had girls from everywhere. Any other party will have a tough time topping this one.

- Rachel

...what a class event the Edmonton gals put on. I was so pleased with the entire weekend (as were Julie and Gen), not only for the outstanding event on Saturday evening, the hospitality suite both nights, and the great times at the clubs on Friday and Saturday, but especially with the people involved. I enjoyed renewing and deepening acquaintances with several gals I met at last year's WF. I was also very impressed with some of you "new girls", who seem to have come out of the blue and in a short time are at the forefront of the TG scene in Edmonton. - Andrea

If you only attend one gala TG event next year make it this one. "A must see" raves Joe Seigel. "Explosive" states Miss B. Haven of the Winnipeg Free Press.

- Cathy

I'm pleased everyone was happy with Winterfest 2002. I've already got plans and schemes for 2003.

- Dixie

Well, my very first outing ever!!! The Winterfest party was the most special event that I have ever been to in my life time (and let me tell you I have done every thing known to man as we all know it)! I don't know what was more special, Shelly being out for the first time, or meeting all those wonderful people. Talking to each one of them was something I will never forget. Thank you each and every one of you I had the opportunity to chat with; you all made my first time a wonderful event.

Oh yeah WATCH OUT MESSY MESSY CROSSDRESSERS HERE I COME! OH BEER!!!!

- Shelly

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"Crossdressing to Live, Not Living to Crossdress" - April [insalem@earthlink.net](mailto:insalem@earthlink.net)

## DEFINITIONS

(Adapted from The Beaumont Trust Information Leaflet)

**Biological Sex** is being male or female, as determined by chromosomes, and body chemistry. In puberty it is marked by the development of secondary sexual characteristics, facial hair in men, breast development in women, and so on.

**Gender** is expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity. It is how people perceive themselves and how they expect others to behave. It is largely culturally determined.

**Cross-Dressing** refers to the adoption, fully or partially, of the clothes normally identified as belonging to the opposite sex. People may cross-dress for a variety of reasons of which transvestism, transsexualism and fetishism are the commonest. Some people may also cross-dress as part of a disguise or for entertainment. Others may cross-dress as part of masochistic activities.

**Transvestism** is cross-dressing, with the desire to adopt the clothes, appearance and behaviour normally associated with the opposite gender. For some it is simply 'dressing up,' while for others, known as Dual Role Transvestites, it is a need to adopt the opposite role as fully as possible on a temporary or full-time basis.

**Gender Dysphoria** refers to the dissatisfaction with one's gender(masculinity or femininity) which is in conflict with one's physical sex. The term is usually restricted to those who seek medical and surgical assistance to resolve their difficulty.

**Transsexuality** is a profound form of gender dysphoria where there is a conviction of being "trapped in the wrong body" and the need to express oneself and to be as far as is possible in the gender to which one feels comfortable.

**Hermaphroditism or Intersexuality** is where the physiological sex is ambiguous. The situation may, or may not, be accompanied by various degrees of gender dysphoria. The condition may be due to chromosomal complexes, such as Turner's or Klinefelter's syndromes, congenital errors of metabolism such as androgen insensitivity syndrome and adrenogenital syndrome. There may also be effects from the hormone balance in the foetus or the placenta.

**Homosexuality or Bisexuality** is a situation where sexual attraction is felt for people of the same rather than the opposite sex.

**Bisexuality** is where sexual preference is for either or both sexes. In general, those who are homosexual or bisexual are quite satisfied with their gender and body. Most men who cross dress are not homosexual.

**Gender Identity** refers to a person's sense of him, or herself as masculine or feminine. The cause of gender dysphoria remains uncertain and may well be a combination of internal hormonal and learning mechanisms in the early environment. There is no clear evidence of an inherited or familial factor. Both transvestism and transsexualism often lead to social consequences, which often require skilled specialist counseling. Neither condition is amenable to 'cure', any more than is homosexuality or left-handedness. At one end of the scale is the occasional cross-dresser who perhaps adopts the clothing of the opposite sex for fetishistic reasons, while at the other end of the spectrum is the transsexual who, with thoughtful and carefully directed therapy, usually becomes

happier as an individual after the gender reassignment process. Between these two extremes of cross-dressing are gradations, with the transvestite functioning somewhere in between. The transvestite who knows that he, or she in rare cases, is not alone and not insane is more able to come to terms with the condition and learn to live with it. Gender possibilities are broad, as are those of sex. People can exist anywhere along the continuum.

**Transvestism** tends to be little understood, though work in recent years to change public attitudes means that it is, perhaps, no longer a subject of fear, but is more seen as being harmless. It is a subject commonly treated in the press in a way which exploits it for sensationalism, but women's magazines seem to be more sympathetic. Perhaps it does not feel such a threat to women as it does to men. When one is very close to the person, however, it may well be a different matter. Among families it seems to be very threatening at first. Understanding is not as good as it might be among people in the caring professions, the clergy, police and social workers, who may be called on to offer help.

The unhappiness often experienced by many transvestites comes from loneliness and anxiety about their situation, and considerable confusion about their feelings. In a sense they are a minority group, who fail to conform to what is regarded as normal behaviour and may therefore fear the consequences should the activity be discovered. Society's acceptance of females who choose to dress in traditionally male clothes is widespread in the West, but cross-dressing by males is much less accepted. Throughout history, women adopting the male role have largely gone unremarked. Partners are often concerned that their man may become homosexual or transsexual, though this is unlikely to happen, once the person is sure of himself. Some transvestites do opt to live full time as women and some may be homosexual or bisexual by coincidence.

In many transvestites, however, the urge to cross-dress is irresistible. Belief in society's lack of approval may make the transvestite attempt to suppress the behaviour, or to keep it secret from those whom he loves for fear of destroying the relationship. This may lead to a depressive phase where counselling by understanding professionals is crucial. Self help organizations around the country provide an outlet for transvestites and their wives to meet socially to combat the sense of isolation.

**Transsexualism** is usually characterized by a continuing conviction that the physical anatomy is incompatible with the true gender role. Thus a female to male transsexual will feel she has "a man's mind trapped in a female body" and vice versa. Surgical attempts to allow such individuals to live in their chosen gender role, known as gender reassignment surgery, (or more commonly, sex-change operations), are less complex for the male to female (mtf) than for the female to male (ftm) clients. However, entering the adopted social role is often much simpler for the ftm. Hormone prescription for mtf transsexuals is said to lower sexual appetite, while for ftm's the reverse is said to be the case. However, it does not seem likely that it will alter sexual interest. Transsexuals may be heterosexual or homosexual, like the rest of the population. Sexual orientation is a variable, and some transsexuals are content to remain celibate.

**Erotic fetishism** is the dependence on particular objects, or parts of the body, to obtain sexual arousal. Clothing may come to be a fetish object for this purpose and may enhance

sexual stimulation during solitary, or partnered, sex. Common fetish objects are female underwear, leather wear and rubber, but almost anything can be identified and come to be used as a fetish object. The problem seems recorded more frequently, and in more judgmental terms, for males than females. Using female underwear for fetishistic purposes is one reason for partial cross-dressing. While many transvestite adolescents may go through a phase where the wearing or using clothes of their choice produces an erotic experience, it has intrinsically a different motivation from fetishism.

**Masochists** derive pleasure from pain or humiliation usually within a sexual context. In their wish to play on their idea of the 'weaker sex' some males may cross-dress in order to be dominated by a partner. It is the fantasy experimentation with issues of power within relationships. Its opposite is **sadism**.

**Homosexual Men and Lesbians** are, in general, content with themselves as men or women. Many gay men emphasize their masculinity. Some have more feminine personalities and the distinction is clearly marked in some countries. Possibly it is the more feminine gay men who cross-dress, though such behaviour is often frowned on, and they may find an outlet in parodying women, as in 'drag' acts.

**Role-reversal** in pantomime is part of theatrical tradition, and was a recurring theme in Shakespeare's work. There are also many male or female impersonators, drag artists and comedy sketches involving cross-dressing. Drag balls, fancy dress parties and student rag sessions afford an opportunity for the public to dress for fun, highlighting the gender stereotypes by ridiculing both sexes.

**The incidence** of transvestism is estimated at approximately one in a hundred of the male population. It has never been accurately estimated in the female population. The incidence of transsexualism is considerably rarer, probably being of between 1 in 10,000 to 1 in 15,000 of the population. Thus a town of 100,000 people may have at least 500 males who cross-dress and five to eight transsexuals. The actual figures are probably considerably higher. Many transvestites cross dress in the utmost secrecy for fear of censure or ridicule, while those who have overcome this problem can be said to have "come out of the closet." It should be pointed out that, while some transvestites say their dressing is an expression of their 'femininity,' transsexuals dress in a way they feel is appropriate for their innately determined gender identity.

#### Aspects Of Transvestism

The majority of transvestites are heterosexual men, who are often married with families. The desire to cross-dress seems usually to begin at an early age when the only available clothes may be those belonging to female members of the family. A transvestite boy may suffer feelings of isolation and guilt, but is often too young to realize the reasons for the need. At first cross-dressing is often nonsexual but during puberty may take on erotic overtones.

Transvestism is not a disease and therefore the term 'cure' does not apply. It is a behaviour pattern, which has underlying reasons not yet fully understood. In some societies, it might be perceived as a harmless quirk. It may however be regarded as threatening in a relationship. Often the transvestite has avoided telling his partner, believing it may pass once he is married, only to be discovered accidentally at a later stage when it re-emerges. The female partner may feel let down or angry at not being told. Often cross-dressing is simply a safety valve and a form of escape from the pressures and responsibilities of work and social demands. A partner may react with complete revulsion, leading to separation and divorce. At the other extreme, the partner may find the behaviour pattern intriguing, perhaps even stimulating. The majority probably falls between these two extremes, and forms some sort of compromise and tolerance without necessarily approval.

A transvestite who indulges in cross-dressing at the expense of time spent with wife and family, and at the cost of purchasing a double wardrobe, risks alienating both wife and family. If the couple can work together in mutual acceptance of feelings, and to support the partnership, there is a real possibility that the marriage may be strengthened and enhanced. Such transvestites may have developed a better understanding of the opposite sex.

Many partners lack knowledge and assume that cross-dressing equates with homosexuality. They may also fear the possibility of contracting a sexually transmitted disease. A transvestite is no more at risk in this than any other member of the public. More commonly a partner may feel inadequate and believe that somehow she must have failed her husband as a woman. Often the most damaging is the feeling of being deceived, and that the secret has gone unshared despite the intimate life which they otherwise have. Like the transvestite himself the partner may fear adverse reaction from parents, relatives, friends, and particularly the children of the marriage.

It is important to remember that people who cross-dress are primarily individuals, and that labeling can do considerable damage. Individuals should not be categorized and each person should be treated as an individual in their own right.

#### Conclusion

The subject of cross-dressing is complex. The aim of this letter is to give an outline of some of the problems that may occur. It is not possible to give all the answers to all the problems. If, after reading this, you would like further information, please write to us at The Northern Concord, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.

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## FROM THE NEWSGROUPS

### Normal? What?

We are not NORMAL by any stretch of the imagination and far less normal than a cisgendered person. Any group of people who make up a VERY small minority of any group is not considered normal for that group of people. How can you claim THEY aren't expressing their true gender and that we are MORE normal than they are?

### Stephe

I have to agree with you.

A little comparison: Is a Texan normal? The majority of the world's populations are not Texans... Sure, there are a lot of states, countries, tribes and whatever, making up a whole colourful population. But is the group of Texans less normal than the group of non-Texans, or just less common?

Talking about genders - that big cisgender group isn't really that uniform either. As for men, we have the grunting, one-syllable gorilla, the two-syllable thug, the leather-clad muscle man, the body worker, the delicate man, the extravagant, the... Well - quite a colourful population, expressing their genders. To the disdain of some maybe, but still in the big group of cisgendered.

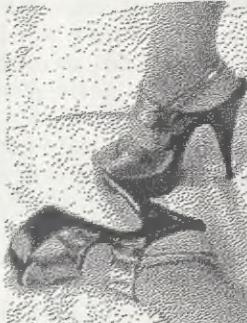
We're part of that colourful population, with our different genders. The collection of transgendered genders is smaller than the collection of cisgendered genders, but those just make us less common, not less normal. I'm just as normal as the thug, and as the "gorilla", and the delicate man and so on. And those in the "greyzone" between cis- and transgendered are just as normal as us, too.

### Monica Lie



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### Cleavage Tips:

A discussion thread in alt.fashion.crossdressing (started by Jennifer Jones) brought up an interesting idea on accentuating one's cleavage with any bra. On the same principle as the thin band of silicone provided on thigh-high stay-up stockings, it was proposed that running a thin band of silicone along the underwire portion of the bra will help to push up what flesh you have. (Of course, this presupposes that one has shaved one's chest already!)

Apparently, it does work. However, Coral Aerie mentioned in a follow-up posting that one needs to choose the silicone carefully, as commercial construction sealant contains arsenic (to inhibit mold). Dishwasher-safe or laboratory sealant is a better bet.

### Groaner

The Invisible Man wanted to know where he came from. He consulted with detectives, genealogy specialists, and the like. It was discovered that his father had gone to Denmark for a sex-change operation. While there, she met a man who used to be a woman. They fell in love. The Invisible Man was born nine months later. That's right, the Invisible Man had Transparents!

Now all becomes clear!

Pauline Aston.

Groan!! ;-) Angel, (we'll have to stop all this groaning in here in case people think something steamy is going on! ^~)

Thanks for "clearing" that up for us. It's easy to "see right through" to your humor! Always be cautious if the guy says he needs "time to reflect".

Jenice <http://www.geocities.com/jenicebay>

## CAN'T BEAT CROSSEDRESSING!

Halloween is a national holiday for straight men to go out dressed in women's clothing one night per year.

Some types of porn are felonies. You can explain those lingerie pics on your hard drive as shopping for your wife.

If you overdo a tight fitting bit of clothing, you can cut it off yourself. I have never heard of CDing being the reason for an emergency room visit. Most kinky emergency room visits are to remove a strange object from a part of the body where it shouldn't be or to remove a part of the body from an object where it was not designed to fit. If you do end up in the emergency room and they discover what you are wearing under your street clothes, it is most likely going to be the best underwear you own just like your mother wanted you to wear in case you were in an accident.

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The elastic may lose its stretch, but lingerie does not gain weight and ask you if you still love it as it gets older.

If the wife spots lipstick or makeup on you that you missed, it could cost you a whole lot less in the long run to explain it is yours than to have her discover it was from an affair with another woman.

Crossdressing doesn't leave evidence like bruising or scratch marks on your back for a week that would be hard to explain to the wife.

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If you get caught you get embarrassed. That is it. Not like the guy who got caught in a farmer's barn poking one of his goats. Being charged with trespassing was only the beginning of that guy's problems.

The lingerie sale ads in the Sunday paper are like free porn.

You never have to go to a bad section of town in the middle of the night to find what you want. Lingerie is on sale in every mall, Wal-Mart and most grocery stores in the nation.

You can get aroused driving past clothes lines of drying laundry, looking in the dryers at laundromats or looking in the window of Victoria's Secret at the mall.

## The Closeted Crossdresser

This is a group in which members can openly discuss issues associated with crossdressing. The purpose of the group is to assist one another by sharing ideas, stories, photos, fashion and makeup tips and techniques, or simply chatting about crossdressing. There's a wealth of info and support, and it's a fine place to be. Join us!



<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/closetedcrossdresser>

People would notice if you went out in public in handcuffs and a ball gag. But you can wear a matched set of bra, panties, garter belt and thigh highs under your man clothes, and no one notices.

Once you get past the inevitable purges, everything you buy is reusable after a run through the laundry. The money you spend on hookers, porno machines, hotel rooms, and condoms... is gone forever.

You don't need to wear a condom under your panties.

[BernadetteTS docfont@voyager.net](mailto:BernadetteTS docfont@voyager.net)



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